

# Finally, a cure we don't need

**Bill Hall/Lewiston Tribune**

If you were to encounter me on a gray day when the sunlight bouncing off my head isn't blinding you, you would recognize that I have lost most of my hair.

And if you are as kind a person as most of my readers, it might gladden your heart to learn that science suddenly appears to have a strong chance of "curing" baldness.

There has been a breakthrough by those trying to create hair gardens on the heads of people like me (not to mention men who can't grow armpit hair and suffer emotionally from naked armpit syndrome).

Notice up there in that second paragraph that I placed the word "curing" baldness in quotation marks. That signals my resistance to the common belief that baldness is an illness or a bodily failure.

But don't cry for me, my friends. Baldness in an adult male, as I have explained here so many times before, is a natural, healthy condition. On the other hand, a full head of hair on a grown male is an abnormal development for a male human (as well as for some other apes). Hair scientists should be working on cures for the heartbreak of hairy head, not the totally ordinary and rather erotic condition known as baldness.

If you've been paying attention over the years as boys mature into men, you already know the steps involved in achieving normal development of a human male. As soon as those manly man hormones start bubbling up in a growing boy, several changes occur: The voice deepens. The shoulders beef up and widen. Hair starts growing on the lower face.

And then, in a man's late 20s, the hair starts thinning and finally vanishes from on top of the head for good, as Nature always intended.

Some young men, not understanding how normal and lucky that is for them, panic and start sloshing greasy potions onto their noggins, trying to regain lost hair.

Don't the poor fellows know - especially in the current, intelligent generation of human females - that bald is recognized by most women as the most attractive stage of a man's courting life?

But the very potions that are concocted to make pathetic flimsy fuzz form on bare heads will confirm the accuracy of what I tell you today. Most of those potions contain warnings that the "remedy" may cause breast growth in male customers. That's because some of those ointments dilute the full measure of maleness by stimulating borderline female characteristics like growing hair on the head deep into maturity. What is agreeable for a grown woman's head in that regard is a disappointment for a grown man.

Personally, even if hair restoration becomes fully possible, I wouldn't go near hair-growing procedures, especially if they worked.

There are advantages to my naked dome even beyond how appealing that is to women. For instance, I don't have to dry my hair after a shower. I don't have to stand there in front of a mirror pushing clumps of hair this way and that with a comb or a brush. And I don't have to hiss on my head with a can of hairspray - hair glue. I have too much male pride for desperate struggles like that.

But now comes a team of scientists - headed by Dr. Angela Christiano from Columbia University Medical Center - who may be onto something with the serious possibility of a full-fledged "cure" for baldness.

Suffice it to say, rather than digging hair units out of the hairy back of the head and moving them where they are needed, they are now planted in a hair garden in the laboratory where they grow like a crop of many more hairs than they were to begin with. Then they are planted in the bare field of skin where they are allegedly needed.

One of the strangest twists in this attempt at hair farming is that the testing has involved injecting hair units from humans into human skin that has been grafted onto live mice. That, of course is reminiscent of projects that are growing new human ears on the backs of mice for eventual replacement of ears for people without those handy organs.

You can just see what's coming next - a human ear for a manly man, complete with unsightly hair growing out of it. That'll turn on the ladies even if baldness doesn't.

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*Hall is editor emeritus of the Tribune's Opinion page. His email address is [wilberth@cableone.net](mailto:wilberth@cableone.net).*